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[A Statement from the Occupiers of Westlands to the Board of Trustees and the Sarah Lawrence Community, March 8, 1969]

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March 8, 1969

To: The Board of Trustees and The Sarah Lawrence Community
From: The Occupiers of Westlands

The Trustees' decision to raise tuition was a response to the current economic inflation in American society, and a reaffirmation of Sarah Lawrence's function as an institution comprised of and serving the wealthy minority of this society. During the course of three days of discussion, we as a group have become conscious of the fact that Sarah Lawrence, by responding to economic necessity, is inextricably linked to the society of which it is a part. We have also become acutely aware that it has never fully recognized or dealt with the nature of its responsibility to that society. We have asked ourselves whether the function of this institution is to produce people who will serve the privileged groups and their institutions or, rather, the people. We are confronted with the fact that our pseudo-humanitarian education channels us, when we graduate, into the personnel slots of those institutions, such as welfare and education, which profess to serve the people, but which in fact, prevent them from recognizing and asserting their power.

STATEMENT OF DEMANDS

We believe that the power of the Board of Trustees is illegitimate because it is based solely on wealth and it is in opposition to this power that we have occupied Westlands. By raising our already absurdly high room, board, and tuition \$3,950 to \$4,300, the Trustees have made us

painfully aware of their values, priorities, and assumptions. Under scrutiny we have found these priorities unacceptable. A tuition raise only enables us to maintain the present educational structure of this college. And it is this structure and the assumptions it embodies that are precisely what we challenge. There is no place in society for an institution which serves only the needs of a small class of privileged people. WE DEMAND THAT THE TUITION RAISE BE RESCINDED.

WE DEMAND THAT AT LEAST ONE-THIRD OF ALL STUDENTS ADMITTED NEXT FALL BE FROM LOWER INCOME GROUPS - BLACK, BROWN, RED, YELLOW, AND THE WHITE WORKING CLASS. THEY MUST BE SELECTED ACCORDING TO NEW ADMISSIONS PROCEDURE. SARAH LAWRENCE MUST RESTRUCTURE ITSELF ACCORDING TO THE NEEDS OF THESE STUDENTS AS EXPRESSED BY THEM. We recognize that this would entail radical changes in the structure of Sarah Lawrence now, so that the College can be responsive to the needs of these students.

We find the present admissions policy inadequate for the student body we wish to have. Students are accepted now on proven achievement not on their potential. Therefore, WE DEMAND A NEW ADMISSIONS POLICY. WE DEMAND A MORATORIUM ON THE ADMISSION OF TRANSFER STUDENTS AND THE FRESHMAN CLASS OF 1969-70 UNTIL OUR PROGRAM IS INSTITUTED.

WE DEMAND:

Two-thirds of the freshman class shall be made up of the present applicants. For 1969-70 we will work with pertinent indigenous grass-roots organizations to determine

the criteria for admissions and recruitment of the one-third group as defined above. The one-third admitted in this way will formulate their own plans for future admissions and recruitment procedures.

The present scholarship applicants for next year whose family income is less than \$8000 will be considered as part of the one-third group and those whose families earn over \$8000 will be considered as part of the two-thirds group.

Those who have already submitted applications for 1969-70 should be sent a statement explaining the nature of the new Sarah Lawrence community we are establishing.

WE DEMAND THE ABOLITION OF THE EXISTING ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE. Instead, a group comprised of 60% students and 40% faculty will be instituted immediately to use their collective judgment in the preliminary selection of all incoming students. For 1969-70 they will resort to the existing applications in order to make these preliminary decisions. In deciding on the one-third as defined above, it is understood that this student-faculty group will be responsive to the guidelines indicated by the grass-roots organizations. If the number of acceptable applicants exceeds the number of students the college can accommodate, then all the final acceptances will be made by lottery. We recognize that there is no fair way to distinguish among acceptable applicants.

WE DEMAND THAT THE PRINCETON PLAN BE ABOLISHED AS A STANDARD FOR GRANTING SCHOLARSHIPS TO ANY APPLICANT.

WE DEMAND THAT SARAH LAWRENCE IMMEDIATELY CONSIDER ITSELF A COEDUCATIONAL COLLEGE AND DECLARE THIS PUBLICLY. The following decisive steps must be taken:

A Committee of students and faculty with the sole purpose of actively recruiting male students must be established. This committee will be responsible for informing the entire community of its progress. 50% of all incoming Freshman, at least 50% of all incoming transfers, and at least 50% of all incoming graduate students, and 50% of incoming Continuing Education students must be men. The College must immediately change its emphasis from admitting men as special students to admitting Freshmen and transfer students with the idea that they will remain and be graduated from Sarah Lawrence.

There are two ways of regarding ideas, and the analysis of everything, from art to mathematics, can be approached in these two ways: either in isolation, or as arising out of the social context. Sarah Lawrence has emphasized the former to the exclusion of the latter, not only in the realm of ideas, but in the realm of the individual as well. Education should develop each person's consciousness of self. But contrary to prevalent Sarah Lawrence myths, true individuality does not mean that each individual is so unique that he cannot be understood by or share his development with other people. True consciousness of self means that we recognize our common humanity; Sarah Lawrence makes this realization difficult.

To move in the direction outlined above we must not only change our relationship to society, but we must also

change our present relationship to the faculty. WE DEMAND THAT ALL EDUCATIONAL DECISIONS BE MADE BY STUDENTS AND FACULTY IN A JOINT ENDEAVOR, WITH ALL OF US PARTICIPATING EQUALLY. THE PRESENT COMMITTEE STRUCTURE MUST BE ABOLISHED.

A true and self-determining community of students and teachers must exist. To achieve this WE DEMAND FIRST, THE ABOLITION OF THE FACULTY APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE AND SECOND, THAT STUDENTS AND TEACHERS IN THE SAME FIELD HAVE THE POWER TO HIRE AND FIRE TEACHERS WITHIN IT. A Student's participation within a field should be determined by present enrollment in a course and completion of either a one year course or two semester courses in that field.

Because teachers and students must be responsible to each other, we urge that teachers and members of a class recognize their responsibility to a student who is not seriously committed to the class and take action agreed upon by all concerned.

The present tenure system obstructs any rapid change in the curriculum. We are a small college. We have a certain number of teachers. We must keep teaching positions both flexible and open in order to respond to a dynamic curriculum. Moreover, the tenure system gives authority without accountability. Therefore, WE DEMAND A MORATORIUM ON TENURE UNTIL A RESTRUCTURING OF THIS PROCESS IS IMPLEMENTED.

The present marking system obstructs the openness and honesty which are necessary for true community. For each course we are given three forms of evaluation which are often

conflicting: a report which we read, a confidential statement which we cannot see, and a letter grade to which we are not supposed to attach any importance. This triple standard must be abolished. The grading system prostitutes the educational experience by fostering false values and goals. It categorizes a person's mind and reduces educational experience to a marketable commodity. Moreover, in a true community there can be no concept of failure. THEREFORE, WE DEMAND AN END TO CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS AND ANY FORM OF GRADES. INSTEAD WE DEMAND AN EVALUATION OF THE CLASS ARRIVED AT THROUGH DISCUSSION BY THE ENTIRE CLASS INCLUDING THE TEACHER.

WE DEMAND AN ACCEPTANCE OF OUR DEMANDS BY THE TRUSTEES BY MONDAY, MARCH 10th, 1969, AT 4 P.M.

WE CONTINUE TO BE OPEN TO DISCUSSION WITH ANY MEMBER OF THE STUDENT BODY ON ANY ISSUE.

This statement was ratified unanimously by the students occupying Westlands at noon on Saturday, March 8, 1969.